

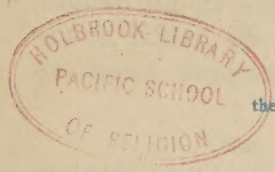
ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

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the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 1

Sixteenth Year

January 7, 1949

CHINA

Missions

According to a report of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America the overwhelming majority of foreign missionaries at present expect to remain in China, even though the Communists gain control of the government.

In a report on 16 Protestant groups responsible for the bulk of Protestant mission work in China, the Foreign Missions Conference disclosed that of the 1,758 Christian workers and missionaries, only 137 have withdrawn. A high percentage of this number were described as wives of missionaries with small children and missionaries scheduled for retirement.

Of those remaining, 115 are in Communist controlled or immediately threatened areas. Approximately 10 of these are single women.

Except for Lutheran groups, the majority of foreign mission societies included in the report expressed a policy of favouring the continuance of Christian work in China, irrespective of the political outcome of the present struggle.

Dr Lloyd S. Ruland, secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., expressed the general view held by mission boards that it seems essential to maintain the Christian programme in cooperation with the Chinese Christians in the areas facing Communist control.

The Lutheran groups in China have adopted a policy of evacuating missionaries from Communist areas, and of sending missionaries to the United States, unless they can be found useful in other countries or in China areas not threatened by Communist armies.

Two of the 16 groups covered by the report have taken an active policy encouraging field personnel to remain at their posts. These are the China Inland Missions with over 700 missionaries, about 50 of whom are in Communist areas, and the Y.M.C.A. with six field personnel in Communist territory.

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Several groups have increased their missionary personnel since the launching of the Communist offensive. These included the China Inland Mission, which added 26 missionaries, the Congregational-Christian, the Baptists, the Reformed Church, the United Church of Canada, and the Free Methodists.

One reason a number of missionaries have decided to stay in China, according to Dr Rowland Cross, executive secretary of the Far Eastern Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference, was a recent statement issued by leading Chinese Christians urging missionaries not to leave China. This statement, he said, helped to offset the impression among many missionaries that their presence might embarrass Chinese coming under Communist control. The names of the Chinese Christian leaders were not disclosed.

The group described by the report as least worried by the Communists are the older missionaries. One of them is quoted as saying: "We have lived through many revolutionary periods and this situation in many respects is not different than the others".

Seven of the groups surveyed have missionaries in Communist areas. These are the Congregational Christians with 20; the China Inland Mission with about 50; the Y.M.C.A. with 6; the Methodist General Board with 10; the Seventh Day Adventists with 10; the Foreign Department of the Women's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church with 8 single women missionaries, and the Evangelical and Reformed with 11. The Presbyterians are thought to have missionaries in Communist areas, but no accurate report is available.

Mission and Christian groups, and the number of missionaries representing each, included in the report are the Presbyterian Church, USA, 235; the Congregational-Christians, 75; the Reformed Church, 39; Protestant Episcopal, 91; United Lutheran, 20; Y.M.C.A., 14; Women's American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, 37; Methodist General Board, 108; Seventh Day Adventists, 85; Northern Baptist Convention, 57; China Inland Mission, 700; Foreign Department of Women's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church, 150; Y.W.C.A., 5 field workers; Evangelical and Reformed, 19; Evangelical United Brethren, 23, and an estimated 100 missionaries connected with the Augustana, Evangelical and Lutheran Free Synods.

* *

The Foreign Missions Conference of North America has issued a Message to Missionary Societies and Missionaries, from which we quote the following:

"However, we wish at this time to express our confidence in our missionary workers, our affection for them, and our earnest hope that a strong nucleus or 'task force' of each mission will remain to share with us the problems and opportunities of the days ahead. We should be sorry to see any precipitate movement of missionaries away from China which might further reduce the morale of the Chinese people and Chinese Church, or suggest that the Christian world fellowship cannot transcend domestic strains and international tensions, or that it does not fully sympathize with the Chinese Church in this crisis."

* *

The United Board for Christian Colleges in China also want to go on. They have issued a statement of policy from which we quote the following;

"The Trustees of the United Board have taken the great responsibility of deciding that so long as it is possible for the Colleges to continue their work in accordance with their basic Christian purposes, we shall continue to give them every support. In any event, we shall try to assure the continuance of Christian higher education for China, and we shall stand behind the more than a thousand faculty members who have dedicated their talents and their lives in China's service."

E.P.S. Geneva

INDONESIA

Conference of Christian Youth

On Sunday December 19, a Conference of Christian Youth for the whole of Indonesia was opened in Batavia. This conference had been called together by the "Oslo Committee" which had made it its object after the World Youth Conference of 1947 to create an Ecumenical Youth Council for Indonesia. The programme of the Conference had to be changed considerably since the opening day coincided with the beginning of the military action against the Indonesian Republic. A correspondent reports that the delegates seek to witness to the unity of Christ but that they are in great distress concerning the action undertaken by the Netherlands Government.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Ministers to get World Council Findings

Copies of the findings of the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Amsterdam last summer, have been given as Christmas presents to 25,000 Methodist ministers. The volumes were presented as part of the denomination's new four-year programme, "The Advance for Christ and His Church". According to Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, one of the presidents of the World Council, the books contain "the highest and broadest expression of common Christian principles yet achieved by democratic agreement between 150 Churches which compose the Council."

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Faith and Order Commission

To provide for continuing study of the theological disagreements which divide the Churches, the American section of the World Council's Commission on Faith and Order has reestablished on an active basis the American Theological Committee, to be headed by Dr Clarence T. Craig, professor at Yale Divinity School.

E.P.S. Geneva

NORTH AMERICA

To Carry On World Council Organisation for North America

To ensure full participation of United States member Churches in the World Council of Churches, the American Committee for the World Council voted on December 14, 1948, to recommend to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches that a conference of American member Churches be set up as an official body to carry on World Council work in North America.

The United States has been a member of the United Nations since its inception. It has been a member of the United Nations since its inception. It has been a member of the United Nations since its inception.

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Following this recommendation, the American Committee passed a resolution unanimously dissolving itself and handing over its business to an interim body which will guide United States World Council activities until the Conference of member Churches is approved and established. Members of this interim body include Dr Franklin Clark Fry, president of the United Lutheran Church in America, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, Bishop of the Methodist Church, New York area, and Dr Douglas Horton, secretary of the Congregational Christian Churches.

A resolution was unanimously passed commending the leadership to Dr Horton, chairman of the body, which has guided policy and stimulated public support for the World Council during its ten-year provisional period prior to the Amsterdam Assembly.

The new World Council Conference of the United States member Churches will be set up with the approval of the World Council Central Committee, and will include the delegates and alternates selected by the denominations for the Amsterdam Assembly, or denominationally selected successors. The Conference will also include fraternal delegates from other ecumenical organisations and denominational world organisations. Prominent among these delegates will be representatives of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

The Friends of the World Council, Inc., the American instrument through which public funds are passed on to the World Council, will remain unchanged.

E.P.S.Geneva

Kagawa Invited to India

Dr Toyohiko Kagawa, Japanese Christian leader, has been invited by the Madras Provincial Government to visit India as an adviser in the setting up of cottage industries among farmers.

Cottage industries have been increasingly developed among Japanese farmers, who are encouraged to use their idle time in straw-weaving, wood-carving and other profitable pursuits.

Dr Kagawa's visit may serve as a means of establishing useful contacts between the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) and the United Church of South India. These contacts, in turn may have far-reaching significance in the field of church union and evangelism.

E.P.S.Geneva

JAPAN

Reports on Amsterdam Assembly

Michio Kozaki, Soichi Saito and the three Episcopal bishops have returned from their journeys to the world Christian conferences of the past summer. Their reports have stimulated a new interest in the ecumenical movement.

Dr Michio Kozaki, moderator of the United Church of Christ in Japan, had a 45-minute meeting with the Emperor Hirohito at which he reported to the Emperor on the Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Amsterdam.

E.P.S.Geneva

JAPANChristian Education

The Japan Council of Christian Education has been set up largely under the leadership of the Kyodan (the Church of Christ in Japan) but with some Lutheran and Anglican participation. The division of responsibility between the Council and the Sunday School Department of the Kyodan is still being worked out.

The concern of Japanese Christians to ensure the spontaneous autonomous development of their church life is reflected in a warning offered by a correspondent of the "International Review of Missions" against "too much organisational advance, without sufficient genuine integration into the life of the Kyodan and other Churches."

E.P.S. Geneva

FINLANDYouth Work

To carry the work of Christian evangelisation among tens of thousands of young people hitherto estranged from church life, a Youth Institute is to be built by the Church of Finland.

This Institute, which will open in the autumn of 1949, will be linked to a larger body, the Parish Institute, in view of the extent to which local congregations are now participating in youth work in Finland.

The numerous Christian youth organisations which formerly were engaged single-handed in this field now work in close cooperation with the official Church. Of historical importance in this connection was the centralisation of youth work and the attainment of a united front in the Church of Finland. The formation of the Consultative Board of Youth Work of the Church of Finland was approved in December 1947 at a meeting of bishops. In this board which embraces the whole youth work of the Evangelical-Lutheran confession both Christian youth organisations and local congregations are represented.

The Church of Finland held a special Youth Week during autumn 1948 and an illustrated booklet, "This is Life", expounding the aims of this campaign was widely distributed.

Despite this extension of youth work only 41 new theological students (29 men and 13 women) are reported to have begun studies during autumn 1948. Prof. Osmo Tiilikä, President of the Theological Department of the University of Helsinki, reports as contributory factors the poor stipends paid to pastors, the difficulty of finding rooms for students at Helsinki and the high cost of living.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYRadio-Bamberg Set Up

When the occupying authorities have given their approval to the setting up of a Christian broadcasting-station in Bamberg, leaders of the Evangelical and Roman Catholic Churches will meet in mid-January to draw up the constitution of the company, which has been registered with full rights as a public corporation. The administrative body in charge of the station will consist of seven representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and seven of the Protestant.

E.P.S. Geneva

Reorganisation of the Orthodox Patriarchal Church
in Europe

The Patriarchate of Moscow has decreed the dissolution of the Exarchate of Central Europe, which had its headquarters in Vienna. Archbishop Sergius, the former Exarch, who has been appointed Archbishop of Berlin and Germany, will take up his residence in Berlin.

The Russian Orthodox Exarchate of Western Europe, headed by Metropolitan Seraphim, of Paris, is to continue in existence. The new arrangement is that the parishes of the Patriarchate in Austria are to be transferred to the Exarchate of Western Europe.

E.P.S.Geneva

SIAM

Evangelisation

A great evangelistic opportunity is reported by both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries in Siam, where the instability characteristic of the general situation in South East Asia is apparent but full religious liberty has been proclaimed by the Constituent Assembly.

The Church of Christ in Siam records the highest membership yet attained - 14,000 - and the establishment of a separate Chinese Diet of the General Assembly to cater for the needs of the rapidly increasing Chinese community.

Two new missions have entered the territory - the World Wide Evangelisation Crusade and the Finnish Pentecostal Mission.

Another significant experiment reported by the "International Review of Missions" has been initiated by the Church of Christ and the American Presbyterian Mission, the reclamation of a tract of abandoned rice land for the settlement of about forty Christian families and the development of a cooperative economic life.

E.P.S.Geneva

FRANCE

\$40 as Christmas Present to French Pastors

Thanks to the generosity of American Presbyterian Churches, every French Protestant pastor has received a Christmas present of \$40 (nearly a month's stipend).

E.P.S.Geneva

NORTH AFRICA

Missionary Development

The Rev. Paul Brès, one of the younger pastors of the French Reformed Church in Algeria, has been appointed to specialise in evangelisation of the Muslim population of French North Africa. This appointment follows the decision of the Synod of that Church, taken in January 1948, to form a missionary commission. The functions of that commission are to maintain relations with the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society to study the possibility of inaugurating missionary work in Algeria, on its own financial responsibility, and to strengthen the ties between the French Reformed Church and the missionary societies already working in North Africa.

E.P.S.Geneva

GERMANYReorganisation of the Synod of Brandenburg

The Provincial Synod of the Evangelical Church of Berlin and Brandenburg, which is one of the provinces of the Old Prussian Union, after three days of discussions in mid-December, has sanctioned its new constitution.

In this document, the Church of Berlin and Brandenburg describes itself as a "Church of the Lutheran Reformation", which has "retained its special character through centuries of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed communities scattered through it". This statement, observes the Evangelical weekly "Die Kirche", of Berlin, in its issue of December 26, "reflects the desire to keep alive the experiences and perceptions gained during the church struggle, by avoiding - though in full consciousness of confessional values - all absorption in historical differences, all narrow compartmentation, so that all confessions represented in a church may live side by side in that church in spiritual openness and honesty. This principle of preaching is recognised in the affirmation regarding unlimited fellowship of preaching and Holy Communion between Lutherans and Reformed. The Reformation was described in the course of the debate as a task required afresh of each succeeding generation. This view likewise should be strongly emphasised in the statement which has been issued."

Of equally far-reaching importance is the fact that, while no vow has been prescribed for the members of the inner group working within the parish itself, the constitution urges those belonging to the "serving community" - which description was unanimously approved - to declare with due solemnity that, in furtherance of the undertaking made at their confirmation, they will confess openly to their Christian faith, play their part in the worship of the church, and contribute by prayer, sacrifice, and service to the life of the parish.

The constitution will come into force on April 1, 1949, after its ratification by the Old Prussian Church Directorate. During its preparation, the Constitutional Committee strove to reach agreement with the other Provincial Churches of the Old Prussian Union, and succeeded in doing so on all essential points, especially with regard to the preamble, with the Provinces of Saxony, Pomerania and Silesia. Views were exchanged and understanding reached on these matters with, in addition, the Church of Westphalia and the Rhine Province, and with the Established Churches of the Eastern Zone outside the Old Prussian Union.

E.P.S.Geneva

SUDANNew Church Centre

Construction of the Unity Church which is being built in Omdurman by the Evangelical Church, the Church of England Diocese of the Sudan, and the American Mission is fast nearing completion, despite shortages of building material and claims on such material for other construction schemes. The walls of the church are now up and Christian people can see that the dream of which they have long talked will soon be a reality. The building will, in time, have facilities for various Christian activities and become the centre for all church life and work in that city, the largest in the Sudan.

E.P.S.Geneva

